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CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

BY

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I.

HUMAN society is the work, not of man, but of God. It is constituted, not by the collective will of the human individuals who compose it, but by the single will of God who created them.

God, had He so willed it, might have made mankind to be simply a collection of human individuals, each isolated from the other, and each independent of the other. He might have multiplied men, in the same way as He made man ; or He might have ordained some method of production which should have left man as independent of his fellow-man for his human existence, as was the first man Adam.

Had God done so, the formation of human

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society might have been still in a certain sense God's work, but not in that sense in which we affirm it to be His work. He might have been the Author of human society in the sense that He is Ruler and Governor of men, but not in that precise and strict sense in which we say that He is the Author of human society as He is the CREATOR of human beings.

God might in that case have been the Founder of human society either mediately or immediately. He might have been its Founder *immediately*, by Himself forming the human beings whom He had created, into a society—co-ordinating the members one with another, and subordinating them to one common head—placing those members under the obligations of law, and investing that head with authority. Or, He might have formed human society *mediately*; and by this we mean,—He might have implanted in men individually a common pro-pension towards coalition into society, in virtue

of which the existence of human society would have been the result of the consent and co-operation of the aggregate of human individuals.

He has done this, but He has done more than this. Not only has He implanted in man a natural propension towards society, but He has constituted man, in virtue of His human being, a member of a society. He has made man a member of a human society independently of and antecedently to any act of his own will. It is not that man agrees to be, but, man finds himself, at his entrance into life, a member of a human society, connected by ties with his fellow-men, and subordinated to his fellow-man. He is born into the world not an independent, isolated unit ; but a subject, living under law. He has a human superior who has authority over him. His natural superior is that man from whose will and from whose action he has derived his being. The man possesses a natural authority over his own offspring.

In other words and briefly, the family is a society; the family is the foundation of all other human societies; and God is the Author of the family. Man is intended by his Maker to be, man finds himself at his birth to be, and man in virtue of his nature is a member of a family, and so of a human society founded by his Creator.

2.

“It is not good for man to be alone”—was the judgment of the Creator as He beheld His human creature. Man stood surrounded by his fellow-creatures, and man had dominion over them, and yet man stood utterly *alone*. He had no real companion, no friend, for of all those living creatures there was no one that was like unto himself. With all of them he had much in common, but between him and the highest and most perfect of them there stretched

a chasm. All that they had he had ; but he had also that which they had not. And it was not well, said God, that this should be. *Non est bonum esse hominem solum*—"It is not good that man should be alone."

Without the creation of another human being, man must remain *alone*. The lower animals, his subjects, might increase and multiply, propagate their species, and reproduce themselves ; but man, their lord and master, must remain alone in his singleness and his solitude. It might have been good for man, had man been constituted otherwise ; but it was not good for man, as God had made him. God might have intended man to be a unit and a solitary, and then in his being solitary and remaining so would have consisted his perfection and wellbeing. But in that case man would have been constituted differently from what he is. From what man is, from what God has made him, we learn the manner of his life, its mode as God intended

it to be. God made man to be a member of a society formed of men, sprung from men ;—in a word, man is *naturally*, or, in virtue of his nature,—a social being.

3.

There existed in man, as God made him, and therefore there were implanted by God in man certain instincts, inclinations, desires, and cravings which, if man were to remain in his singleness, would never be satisfied. There existed in him also certain faculties which would, in that case, never be exercised, and which would therefore exist in vain. Those instincts, inclinations, desires and cravings were ordained in order to the exercise of these faculties. Both pointed towards an object like to man, but differing from him ; and as yet that object did not exist.

There was in man a love for his Maker, there

was in him also a love for his fellow-creatures ; and both had their object, and both were satisfied. But there was in him another love, or an, as yet, undeveloped capacity of love, which could only be developed and made actual through the existence of a being like to himself and who should share his own nature.

Hence it was not good that man should be alone, it was not well that there should be only man. It did not become the perfection of the Divine creation. That creation lacked completeness, for it contained a creature, and that creature its crowning glory, with desires unsatisfied and capacities unfulfilled ; and so God said, —“ Let Us make man a help like unto himself.”

4.

There took place another creation of a human soul, there took place another formation of a human body ; that human soul was infused into

this human body, and the result was that there existed upon the earth another human being. This being was like unto the man, because of the same nature ; and yet different from the man, both in body and in soul. This second human body was formed, not from the slime of the earth, but from the substance of the man. Flesh of his flesh, bone of his bone, blood of his blood, there was an essential bond of unity between those two human beings. But along with this unity, there was also an essential diversity : and this very diversity was a second bond of union. Of the same nature as man's own, this body was moulded in a diverse form. It differed in structure and organization.

And as with this second body, so also with that second human soul which was created to tenant it, and to be the principle of its life. There was discernible in those two human souls a unity of similarity, and along therewith a real diversity. Similar in their essence, in their

spiritual being, in their powers and faculties, in their capacities for knowledge and judgment and will and choice, they differed as to the mode of their being, and the manner of their processes.

There was, in a word, at once a unity and a difference in the sphere of the psychological as well as in that of the physiological ; and both this unity and this difference fitted those two human beings for each other. Man was alone no longer : and God had made for man a help like unto himself.

5.

The Lord God brought to Adam his companion, and Adam called her *Woman*, because she was "taken out of man." God's human creation was now complete. Humanity existed with a diversity of sex in a unity of species and nature. There stood on earth two human

persons, and they were formed and fitted for each other. It was the design of their common Maker, that they should live in union.

But in the furtherance of this design these two human persons were themselves to co-operate. God would not simply *use* those creatures whom He had made to His own image and likeness. He had made them capable of comprehending His designs, and of associating themselves with Him in carrying out those designs. They were not merely creatures endowed with life only and without understanding, like the animals of His earlier and lower creation. His latest works and His masterpieces resembled Himself in their power of knowledge, and in the freedom of their wills. They were spiritual beings, and they were—persons.

6.

Persons alone are the subjects at once of duty and of right. An irrational creature has no duties towards others, and it has no rights of its own. It may destroy, and it is not morally culpable; it may be destroyed, and it has suffered no injury. Injury is the invasion of right, as culpability is the contradiction of duty. Where there are no rights, there can be no injury; where there is no duty, there can be no moral obligation.

But human persons—as persons—as spiritual beings—moral beings as well as intellectual beings—gifted with power of will no less than with power of understanding—are the subjects of reciprocal duty and of individual right. The failure of this duty is an invasion of that right; and it constitutes—an injury.

7.

When the Lord God brought the first man and the first woman face to face with each other, both were full grown. There was no period of infancy in the dawn of their days. There was in them no gradual evolution of the intellect, no awakening of a dormant will. In the first instant of their being, both knew, understood, judged, willed, and chose. For the determination of their will, and for the acts which flowed from it, each was individually responsible.

Each had a capacity for knowledge, and that capacity in each was satisfied. Each was enlightened with the light of nature; and the law of nature was graven on both their hearts. The pages of the book of nature lay outspread before them; and both could read.

But, besides this, God gave, if not to both,

at least to the man, an infused gift of knowledge. He may have bestowed this also on the woman, or the man may have shared it with her. By his natural knowledge man knew his Maker, and, recognizing his duty as a creature, gave to Him that praise and worship which was His due, and to which he had an essential, an inalienable, and an indefeasible right. By the same knowledge man knew also his own end, and that it was to know, to love, and to serve the Divine Majesty from whom he derived his human being.

By means of his infused knowledge man knew, or at least he knew more fully and in detail, his temporal destiny, and his *natural* end. He knew that he was not to be a solitary in the universe of God—that it was not well that he should stand alone—that he was not intended to exist as an isolated, independent unit—that his destiny in the Divine idea was one of duty towards others like unto, but differing from

himself, and that his relation to them was one of right.

The first man and the first woman, as they stood face to face, knew by the evidence of the senses repeated by the testimony of the voice within them—they knew by the light of nature brightened by that further light which God had added—that they were made for each other, and that their natural destiny was—to be one.

8.

Recognizing their destiny as human beings, those two, the first man and the first woman, freely and voluntarily accepted it. An act of real consent, rooted in and springing from a previous act of judgment, was the basis and bond of their union. They entered into a mutual contract, as both were capable of doing ; and the first human contract, the first contract

between two human beings, was a contract between a man and a woman, and that contract was—a *matrimonial* contract.

Both man and woman were capable, and equally capable of contracting, for both were *persons*; and as *persons* both were free, and equally free. Both as *persons* had rights as both had duties. Both had personal rights with regard to themselves individually, and each might transfer these personal rights to the other. By such transference the one would become the possession and property of the other; and from such transference new duties would emerge.

A matrimonial contract is effected by mutual matrimonial consent, and its result is the merging of two physically and intellectually individual human persons in one moral personality; or, the formation of one civil person, leading an undivided life, with common interests and goods.

The consent of those two persons in the paradise of pleasure was their own act, but it was an act elicited in obedience to a divine decree, in submission to and union with the divine will. Such consent once given could never be retracted; the contract which it effected could never be rescinded; the bond which it established could never be dissolved. It was the work, as it was the will, of God; and those whom God had joined together, no man might henceforth sunder.

9.

Woman was then, as she is now, the subordinate equal of man; and matrimony made manifest then, as it makes manifest now, the equality of woman with man. Matrimony is at once the manifestation of her equality, and the charter of her rights. Where matrimony

is had in honour, the position of woman is secure and her rights are sacred. The matrimonial contract is onerous and bilateral, and it is entered into by freely and mutually consenting equals. The wife belongs to her husband, not by right of conquest or by right of purchase, but by the right of her own self surrender. And as she gives, so she receives. She has given herself; she receives him in return. She belongs to him in property; he is equally her possession. She cannot recall her consent or annul her contract; he is equally powerless. God, and God alone, can sever the matrimonial bond; and the only agent which He employs for its severance is the Angel of Death. The dissolution of the bond which binds together a human body and a human soul in the unity of one human life, must precede the dissolution of that other bond which makes two human beings to be no more twain but one. When the golden link of life is severed, the bond of

matrimony is likewise broken. Then—but not till then. While husband and wife both live, their matrimony endures.

10.

Thus was matrimony established in the beginning. And why? Because God had decreed the existence not only of a human being, or of human beings, but of a human *race*. He had constituted His angels in a wonderful order, by their hierarchies and their choirs. But the angels were not a race. No angel reproduced his species. No angel begot, or was begotten. Among them generation and offspring were unknown. It was otherwise with the living creatures of God's lower creation. Among the angels there was a unity of nature with a diversity of order; among the animals there was a unity of nature with a diversity of sex. God

arranged them in their several species, and within those species He made them male and female. God so made them that within each species there might be the principle of its preservation and its increase. Thus the species was reproduced, and the individual creatures which composed it multiplied.

In the individuals of the purely animal or brute creation there were implanted by their Maker appetites and instincts. The satisfaction of those appetites was to the animals the motive of their action ; and the regulation of that satisfaction was the work of these instincts. In satisfying their innate appetites they attained their end ; following their instincts, the divine law regarding them was fulfilled. These instincts were expressions of that law. In following these instincts there was service—but there was no obedience. Obedience requires submission of the will, with knowledge of the law. In the animals there was neither knowledge of law not

will to be bound by it. Obedience moreover requires freedom—freedom from extrinsic compulsion and from intrinsic necessity. And the animals are not free. In blindly following their inborn instincts in the satisfaction of their natural appetites, they are intrinsically necessitated by a law of their animal being.

But man is free. Man can have knowledge of the law which ought to regulate his actions, and man may refuse to obey that law. For such refusal every man is individually responsible.

And yet man too has his appetites—appetites of the same nature, and implanted for the same end as that of those which belong to the lower animals of the brute creation; for man is as really an animal as is the lowest of them all.

Man is a microcosm of creation. In man creation finds its centre. Within the circle of his personal unity there coexist the most opposite extremes. Man is spiritual as are the

angels ; he is animal as are the brute beasts that have no understanding. Man is material as is the earth from which he was taken. There are in man not three souls, but one. But that one soul is at once intellective, sensitive, and vegetative. It is spiritual and it is animal. Apart from the body—disembodied—it can exercise purely spiritual functions ; in the body it can also exercise animal functions by means of the organs of the body. Man's material body is the seat of animal appetites. Every one of those animal appetites is in itself good, for every one of them was implanted of set purpose and definite design by the Hand of God. Were any one of those appetites evil, that evil would redound to the God of Nature, and He would be the Author of evil. The pleasure which accompanies the satisfaction of those appetites is also in itself good ; and this pleasure was given in order to their exercise and for the promotion of their end. And that

end is known to man. Those acts of man's animal appetites which are done in order to their end are so done in accordance with the dictates of man's reason, and in obedience to the higher law of his spiritual nature. They are therefore not only innocent and lawful; they may be also religious and meritorious.

Man's appetites are not ends, but they are means towards an end. That end is known to man's reason, and was ordained by God. Used as means in order to that end man's animal appetites are used reasonably and therefore rightly. When his appetites are satisfied as if they were in themselves ends and means, such satisfaction is irregular, inordinate, and therefore immoral.

II.

God is the God not of anarchy, but of order. When God made man, He established a reign

of order within man as well as around him. There was in man, as he was constituted by his Maker, a perfect subordination of the lower to the higher—of the sensitive to the intellective—of the animal to the spiritual—of his body to his soul. The will of man was his highest power; and his will reigned supreme. The exercise of his appetites was subject to the dominion of his will; and the acts of his will were in accordance with the dictates of his reason. This subordination—this reign of order—this supremacy of will in man formed what theologians call *the integrity of his nature*. Man possessed it during the period of his innocence—while his understanding was as yet unclouded, and while as yet his will had never swerved from its obedience to the voice of his conscience and to the law of his Maker. When innocence was lost, integrity was gone. There was in rebel man rebellion of the appetites against the dominion of that will which had itself rebelled. Man had sold himself, in

his lust after a freedom which became not the creature, into a captivity and a bondage which was at once his punishment and his dishonour. His corruptible body was from the date of his fall henceforward the arena of a struggle which should endure till that body returned to the dust from which it sprang. Throughout his life he should have to wage a warfare—to subdue his rebellious appetites, and to bring them into subjection to the dominion of his will.

When innocence was gone, and integrity of nature had followed it in its departure, the reign of concupiscence began. Fallen man is the subject of concupiscence; and in his struggle against concupiscence matrimony comes to his aid. Comes to his aid, we say, for this was not the primary end of matrimony; and it is not its principal end now. The primary and the principal end of Matrimony was, and is—*Maternity*.

12.

The Lord God blessed the man and the woman, and said to them—"Increase and multiply, and replenish the earth." When the first woman conceived and brought forth her first born son, she called his name Cain, saying, "I have gotten a man through God." Adam then called his wife's name Eve, when he understood her to be "mother of all the living."

Eve was the mother of mankind; and the motherhood of Eve was a motherhood of sorrow. Had her maternity taken place, like her matrimony, in the state of her innocence, it would have been a maternity of unmingled joy, unaccompanied by suffering, unalloyed by sorrow; but between her matrimony and her maternity her transgression had intervened, and God had said—"I will multiply thy sorrows and thy conceptions, and in sorrow shalt thou bring forth children."

Both parents were penitents, but the period of their innocence was ended ; and innocence once gone is gone for ever. Themselves spiritually alive, they were the parents of the spiritually dead. Immaculate conception had been the design of God for every being who was child of man ; but this, the design of their Divine Creator, the transgression of the first father of every human being had frustrated. The offspring of the 'innocent would have been conceived and born in the state of grace, and of the same unfallen, virgin innocence ; but the offspring of the penitent would have to confess with the Psalmist—" I was born in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

The first son of man was to slay his own brother ; but the mother of the murderer had herself entailed God's curse of death on her murdered child. She had travailed in the wilderness by reason of her sin ; and her child while he lived had gazed with her not on the

paradise of pleasure whence she had been thrust, but on that earth which the Lord God had cursed. Her husband's life was a life of labour, for God had said to Adam—"Cursed is the earth in thy work; with labour and toil shalt thou eat thereof all the days of thy life; in the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the earth out of which thou wast taken, for dust thou art, and into dust thou shalt return." Husband and wife alike were clad now no longer in the glory of their innocence, but in garments fashioned from the skins of slain beasts which betokened their degradation.

But, if such was the state of misery to which man had reduced himself, why should he perpetuate this misery in his children? Why, by an act of his own will, give being to others on whom should, through him, be entailed a heritage of sin, of suffering, of sorrow, and of death? Why not end human sin and human

suffering and human sorrow with the human lives of those two human beings who had caused them? God willed them to leave behind them on the earth a posterity, it is true, and they knew this. But then, on the other hand, they had already shewn that knowledge of the will of God was not a sufficient motive to cause them to subject their own wills to His. Their fall had not destroyed their freedom; from without there was no compulsion, there was no necessity constraining them from within. Man's will had forfeited its supremacy of dominion over his lower, animal nature, and had henceforth to struggle for the mastery. Among the enemies of his will there was a traitor within the fortress, a foe of man's own household, and that enemy was—the flesh. But God brings good out of evil; and the enemies of God may be pressed into His service, and made to contribute to the accomplishment of His designs. Those very appetites and animal passions

which exercise so powerful an influence for evil over fallen man, become the auxiliaries of God.

God wills the preservation of the individual, and the preservation of the species, by the multiplication of the individuals who form it. Towards man's co-operation with God for those two ends, two powerful appetites in man lend efficient aid. Man's appetite for food, and the animal pleasure which accompanies or results from its satisfaction, induces man to do that which is necessary in order to the preservation of his life. Man is led by his appetite to eat, and he is forced to labour in order that he may eat. If there were in man no appetite for food, and no pleasure consequent on its satisfaction, would man as a rule take the means necessary in order to the end—the preservation of his life? Does it consist with our knowledge of human nature, and with our experience of human practice, to suppose that a merely intellectual motive existing in the mind of man, would, in

the average man, always so press upon his will as to ensure his spending a considerable portion of his existence in the consumption of the necessary food? Suppose that his eating had been prescribed simply as a duty in order to the refectation of his body, and had been a merely mechanical act, like placing the same quantity of food with the same expenditure of pains, and the same loss of time, in an earthen vessel—an act unaccompanied by any pleasureable sensation, and satisfying no inward craving—would man, as a rule, have persevered in taking this trouble? Still more forcibly may we argue, if man had had to labour in the sweat of his brow to earn this food, or, at least, to be put to no small expense, and compelled to deny himself indulgence in pleasures which would have otherwise been within his reach, would he have from day to day persevered in the use of the means necessary to the end of the repair of the daily decay of his corruptible body?

If this be so with regard to an end which most affects the individual man himself—the preservation of his own life—is it not still more certainly and manifestly so with regard to an end which lies outside himself—the preservation of his species?

If the multiplication of his species had been proposed to man simply as a duty, and that in face of all the trouble and expense, and of all the labour and toil and anxiety which the performance of that duty would necessarily entail upon him, would man have undertaken that duty, or persevered in its fulfilment? Would a merely intellectual motive, existing calmly in his mind, have placed and kept sufficient pressure on his will to induce him to create for himself that which would necessitate a drain upon his resources, and, through an increase of expenditure for others, a diminution of the pleasures which he might otherwise have himself enjoyed?

With His perfect knowledge of that which is in man, God has implanted in his human creature the strongest of all passions. He has done this in order to that end which He wills—the continuance of the human race, and the preservation of the human species, by the generation of human individuals. To the means which is necessary for the accomplishment of this divine end, man's will is thus, as it were, instinctively impelled or drawn.

By a natural instinct human beings are led to obey a law of their nature, and they enter voluntarily into that state of matrimony, the end of which is—*maternity*, and the result of maternity is—*offspring*.

13.

But further, not only are the appetites and passions of human beings enlisted in the service of their Maker for the promotion of His designs;

their affections and emotions contribute towards the same end. Chief among these is that of love. Love, moreover, is as diverse as is its object. And love requires an object. Without an object it is not elicited. It exists potentially but it has not actual exercise. There must exist an object in order to that exercise. Such an object exists when a man is joined in matrimony with one on whom his affections have fastened; and when that matrimony is followed by maternity, there exist other beings who are in turn the objects of a diverse love.

By means of matrimony the family is founded; by means of maternity the family idea is completed; and the family is the very theatre of human affection. In the family there is exercised and made manifest in all its wisely and well-ordered diversity that affection of which the human heart is capable. The perfect family is preserved in its unity by the cords of Adam. It is a centre of human affections, of which no

two are the same. There is the affection of the husband for his wife; and it differs in its character from the reciprocal affection of the wife for her husband. There is the affection of the father for his son, and it differs from that which the mother equals, if she does not indeed excel him in bestowing. It differs also from that affection with which he regards his daughter; and it again is not the same as that with which the mother loves the child of her own sex. A similar diversity is manifest in the love which the children return to their parents. The son loves his mother as he loves not his father; the daughter loves her father as she loves not her mother; and the love of son and daughter is in neither case the same. No less real and manifest is the diversity of love between brother and sister, and brother and brother, and sister and sister. Well may we say that a perfect human family is the centre of human affections, and that it is the

very theatre of human love in its purest form. Here meet the four rivers, with their diverse streams, of conjugal, parental, filial, and fraternal love. These four satisfy, so far as aught created can satisfy, the thirst of love which the Creator has implanted within the heart of His human creature.

Thus, by means of the family does man attain to one of the summits of his natural perfection, and arrive at his truest and purest human happiness.

Outside the family this wealth of human love has no existence. Outside the family man and woman may alike satisfy a lawless passion; outside the family, both parents may love their offspring: but the one love is not—conjugal, and the other is in no true sense—parental.

Outside the pale of matrimony there is no true maternity.

14.

Maternity means more than merely child-bearing. Men are not mere animals; and the function of a mother is not ended when she has given her children birth. God does not simply launch His creatures into existence, and leave them to their fate; by His perpetual action He preserves them in existence and supplies their needs. In the production of each human creature, He associates with Himself two human persons; and in their co-operation they must not only obey His laws, but make the method of His action the model of their own. They must care for the sustentation of their children's bodies by the supply of their bodily wants, since otherwise they would sink beneath the level of the brute creation; they must care also and equally for the education of their children's souls. Children are not pet animals; and although they have not yet entered on the

full exercise of their rights as persons they are as really human persons as are their parents. They are not merely to be fed and fondled : they are to be revered and had in honour as becomes their dignity. As spiritual beings, as gifted with immortal souls, they are, in their personal dignity, the equals of the authors of their material being. Subject to their parents, in virtue of that which from them they have derived, they have duties indeed, but they have rights as well. As spiritual beings they possess intelligences which can be perfected only by a knowledge of the truth ; and they possess wills which, in order to their perfection, must be trained towards the good. From ignorance and from evil they have a right to be free ; and, so far as it lies within his power, to procure this freedom is the office and duty of a parent.

Philosophers tell us that the good and the true are identified with being, and so consequently with each other. Theologians tell

us, that in God these three are essentially one since in Him divine goodness and divine truth are identified with the divine essence ; and that from Him all three when found in the creature are derived. As the Author of our being, God is our Father ; and, as He is our Father, He is also our Teacher and our Ruler. On our parents lies a shadow of the paternity of Him from Whom all paternity in Heaven and on earth is named ; to them therefore it belongs, in virtue of their office, to teach and to rule those personal beings in causing whose existence they have been instrumental. Children then, as *intellectual* and *moral*, or, in a word, as spiritual beings, have a right to look to their parents for that heritage of knowledge and of law which is necessary for the education of their minds and wills. Now, outside the divinely designed and ordered family what guarantee is there for their enjoyment of this their natural right ?

As *social* beings, children have a further

right. Man is, as we have seen, a social being ; by nature he is formed and fitted, and so marked out as destined to be a member in a society of his fellows. The primary and fundamental human society is that of the family ; and man ought to be born into the world of men as a member of a family. True, he may in time himself enter into conjugal relations, and lay the foundations of a family of which he shall be the head ; but for many a year he must, if born outside a family, remain, morally at least, if not otherwise, a unit and a solitary amid the surrounding crowd of his fellow-men.

As *moral* beings, moreover, children have yet another right. They have a right to be sustained by the edification of a good example ; and this especially they expect to find, and they ought to find in their superiors, and, among their superiors, in their first known, and best known superiors, their immediate superiors who are their parents. Who, moreover, is so

much led by example as is a child? He is subject to the influence of example—good or evil—before he is capable of receiving teaching—good or bad. A man is moulded by the intangible moral influences around him; his moral tone varies according to the moral atmosphere he breathes. And if a man, how much more a child? His mother's example is his first lesson. The ideas that first enter his mind are those which have existed in the mind of his mother, which have been clothed in her words, and uttered by her lips. His will has first bent itself beneath the pressure of hers. Hers has been the first authority which he has recognized and obeyed.

What, then, ought not that woman to be who enters on the noble office of a mother, and who has to fulfil the sublime functions of maternity! In order rightly to fulfil these functions she must clearly apprehend, and keep well in view the nobility—the personal dignity of the living

and immortal being who has been committed to her charge. As she forgets her child's personal dignity, so will she neglect her own duties, which are the correlatives of its rights. But how shall she remember that dignity, if she has forgotten her own? We have seen that by the contract of matrimony alone is the personal dignity of woman, and her personal equality with man, and her personal freedom recognized, made manifest, and secured. The woman who enters on maternity without having previously lived in matrimony—who is a mother, but not a wife—has renounced her dignity, and forfeited her place of honour. The child of that woman has for mother one from whose head the crown has fallen; and for father the man who has wrought her dishonour.

At his first entrance on the world, that human being is the victim of a wrong.

15.

Man is the lord of creation, for God gave to man dominion. God gave him dominion over the lower creation—over not only inanimate creatures, but over also living, although irrational creatures. Such creatures man may possess, and in them he can establish, retain, exercise, and secure a right of property. To that which is his property—to that of which he acquires lawful possession—to that which, in a word, belongs to him—he has a right; and he who deprives him of this right, inflicts on him an injury and does him wrong.

Man was also master of himself; and this in a twofold sense. Not only was he *dominus sui*, as holding his lower nature and all his subordinate faculties in subjection to the dominion and mastery of his will; but he could also, in a manner, dispose of himself, and cause himself, by his own consent, to become the property of

another, so that he should be possessed by and belong to that other, who should in consequence have rights of dominion over him. This man did when the first man entered into the first matrimonial contract.

But previous to this transference of dominion—to this delivery of himself into the power of another—he had himself a right of property in that other. The body of that other human person to whom he now belonged, had been formed from his own substance, and to a right of property in it he had therefore a certain claim.

The first man and the first woman were not in the same position. The man was not formed from the woman, but the woman from the man ; and therefore, even after the man was, in virtue of the matrimonial contract, under the dominion of the woman, it still remained true that—"the head of the woman is the man."

By the same right of property, the man has

dominion over his children, inasmuch as they are formed of his substance.

But this right he shares with the woman, inasmuch as they are formed of her substance also.

The common parental right of father and mother over their children rests upon the basis of this fact, that those children are their common offspring.

Here we have, then, in the family, consisting of father and mother and children, a perfect society—one moral whole—a body formed of head and members—constituted and preserved in its moral unity by the existence of one principle and centre of unity, which supposes authority on the one side and subordination on the other.

Such, however, is the perfection of this society, that the exercise of that authority is tempered by duty, and the consequences of that subordination are regulated by right.

These two—duty and right—are divinely united; and in every society which is after the divine idea, must be duly observed.

16.

Among the first duties of a father is that of provision for his children. In order that he should fulfil this duty, he ought to have moral certainty that they are indeed his children. This is reasonable. The motive of his exertion on their behalf is that they are his own—and a reproduction of himself. Hence the necessity of fidelity on the part of the woman. Her fidelity is essential to the matrimonial idea, for without her fidelity the family relations become uncertain, the family rights are weakened in their foundations, and the family duties lose their force of obligation.

Infidelity on the part of the woman, and

consequent uncertainty with regard to the paternity of her children, deprives the man also of another mainspring of exertion. Man covets honours as well as riches ; and his honours as well as his riches he accumulates not for himself alone, but for his posterity after him, or, for himself in his posterity. Now, if uncertainty is introduced with regard to his relation to those who, in virtue of the marriage, may legally claim to bear his name, and to reflect his honours as well as to possess his riches, he is deprived of one of the main motives of action which lead men to do good service for the State.

But above all man is by his wife's infidelity defrauded of the full exercise of his paternal love. How can that man love with a father's love one who may be the child of another, and that other his greatest enemy, who has wrought him the most grievous wrong, and done him the foulest dishonour ?

Hence we see the real reasonableness of that

social ordinance which visits so heavily a woman's sin against chastity, while similar sins on the man's part are so easily condoned. The man's sin is single, the woman's sin is twofold. Both have sinned against God ; in God's sight both are equally guilty, and both merit at God's hands the same punishment. But the woman has sinned *also against society* as the man has not sinned, and cannot sin ; and the woman justly meets *at the hands of society* a punishment which is not inflicted on the man. Her conjugal infidelity, by rendering the paternity of her offspring uncertain, has loosened the framework of society. Self-preservation is a law of nature, and it obtains in the case of the aggregate society as it obtains in that of the individual man. Society rightly resents that which is subversive of its interests and, in a manner, of its existence.

As a moral virtue chastity is the same in either sex ; but as a *social virtue* it belongs

especially to the woman. Chastity is to her what truth and honesty, as social virtues, are to man. That this is the sense of society is apparent from the language of society. We see it in the different sense of the word *honour*, as applied to woman and to man respectively. When we speak of female honour, we mean chastity ; the honour of a man is his truth and trustworthiness. These are necessary in him in order to the welfare of society, as chastity and conjugal fidelity are necessary on the woman's part ; and a lack of these is visited by society on him as it is not visited by society on her. For a man to be dishonest is *a social crime*, as it is *a social crime* for a woman to be unchaste. As individuals we may extend our charity and restore our friendship to a repentant forger, but society forbids our intrusion of him within its pale. It is not unreasonable that society should treat in like manner a repentant woman who has equally violated its laws. Pharisaism is an

evil and a folly: but there is a growth of sentimentalism on this subject in the present day which is, socially, still more mischievous.

17.

We have drawn out the idea of matrimony from the idea of man, as he is a social being; and we have found that in order to the well-being and perfection of society, matrimony must have two essential characteristics—unity and indissolubility. As ordained in the beginning, the matrimonial contract was between one man and one woman; and the contract, once entered into and completed, could not be withdrawn from or dissolved. The unity and the indissolubility of matrimony were therefore of the divine idea and design.

Whatever therefore is opposed to those two essential characteristics—unity and indissolubility—is opposed to the perfection of matri-

mony as divinely conceived and instituted, and is also subversive of the perfection of human society. Among such evils are polyandry, polygamy, and divorce.

Polyandry is the union of one woman with two or more men—not successively, but simultaneously. This is against the law of nature, and it is condemned by the natural conscience. It shakes the foundations of society, and it is opposed to the primary end of matrimony. The curse of childlessness falls where it prevails, and the fountains of human life are stayed. It is at once a sin against God, and a crime against humanity.

Polygamy is the simultaneous union of one man with more than one woman. This is not opposed to the primary end of matrimony, or to the law of nature. Barrenness does not follow as its result; it tends rather to the multiplication of mankind. It was therefore, not being intrinsically evil, divinely permitted in the

infancy of the human race. It is, however opposed to the secondary ends of matrimony, as opposed to the peace and perfection of the family and the family relations, to the undivided mutual love of husband and wife, to the dignity of the woman, and to the welfare of the children. It was divinely prohibited in the primeval institution; and the divine words were—"The man shall cleave to his wife, and they shall be two in one flesh."

Divorce is the dissolution of the matrimonial bond by the annulling of the matrimonial contract; and this also is subversive of the matrimonial idea. The loosening of the bond between husband and wife is a loosening of the bonds which bind together human society.

18.

Human society is the work of God, for it is the result of a principle in human nature, which

has God for its author. When men and women wedded and formed families, those families naturally coalesced into tribes ; and these tribes again, by an extension of the same natural process, coalesced into peoples. The family had its home ; the tribes had their villages, towns, and cities ; the people had its commonwealth. The village was the aggregate of homes ; the town or city was an extension of the village ; the state, kingdom or republic, as the case might be, was the result of a natural coalition of subordinate municipalities under one common ruler. The dominion of the father in his family extended itself with the extension of that family into the kingdom, and its result was the dominion of the king. The royal power is an extension of the paternal power. It is a result, not of social covenant, but of natural evolution. It is a legitimate process of human nature, and, as such, is ordained by the Divine Author of that nature.

Every human society therefore, the most widely extending and the most perfectly developed, as well as the narrowest and the most rudimentary, rests upon the primary society of the family as upon its foundation, and follows it as its type. But matrimony lays the foundation of the family ; and so matrimony lies at the root of human society.

19.

Jesus Christ came as the Redeemer of men, and as the Regenerator of society. He entered into relations with mankind collectively, as well as with man individually. He came as the Second Adam, and as the Founder of a new family. In the first Adam the human family fell ; in the Second Adam a human family was to rise again. As in Adam men died, so in Christ were men to be made alive. The supernatural life of men was the result of their

possession of that habitual, sanctifying grace which is *anima animæ*—the soul of the soul, and which, as such, gives supernatural life to the human soul, as that soul gives natural life to the human body so long as it remains within it. Partakers of this habitual or abiding, sanctifying grace which made them holy, men were made “partakers of the divine nature,” and became members of the human family of the sons of God. By Jesus Christ “came grace and truth ;” and to as many as believed in Him He gave power to become the sons of God. He came to be a human Father in the supernatural order, and He was to beget sons and daughters unto God.

He founded a Church, which He wedded to Himself, and which He calls His Spouse. He speaks of Himself as the Bridegroom, and of her as His mystic Bride.

She is called His Body, He is called her Head ; and the men who compose her are said

by His Apostle — and consequently by the Spirit of Truth who inspired him—to be members of His Body, of His Flesh, and of His Bones.

She, in her individual oneness—as a moral person—is indissolubly united to Him. They are “two in one flesh.” For her sake he left His Father in Heaven, and His Mother at Nazareth, that He might cleave to that immaculate Spouse who had issued from His opened side as He slept on Calvary.

The end of that matrimony of Jesus with the Church His Bride was her maternity, the existence of a supernatural offspring, and His paternal relation towards those children whom He had begotten again unto God.

The words of Jesus to fallen man were—“You must be born again.” As there was a natural process of generation, so there was to be a supernatural process of regeneration. Baptism was the first of those seven sacraments

which He ordained as the instruments or vehicles or channels of His grace. By means of baptism men were made recipients of divine grace, were initiated into that new society of which He was the Head—that new family of which He was the Father—and they acquired thereby a right and title to heaven as their inheritance.

As their Father, Jesus made provision for His children alike in sickness and in health. He provided for them, in their spiritual sickness, a means of healing in the sacrament of Penance. For the healed and whole He instituted the sacrament of the Eucharist ; He gave Himself—as the Living Bread of Life—for the sustenance and refreshment of their souls. As in life, so in death He cared for them ; by the sacrament of Extreme Unction He prepared them for their last agony. That men, moreover, might minister those sacraments to their fellow-men, and to provide for the spiritual

education and government of His children, He instituted the sacrament of Order.

So much for the sanctification of individual men ; but the Redeemer of men came also for the sanctification of *society*. At the date of His advent human society was sick unto death. It had departed from its primeval type, and in order to its restoration, it must return to its primitive and divine constitution. Polygamy which marred, and divorce which destroyed the very idea of matrimony, obtained in all nations of the earth, and even among the chosen people. Conjugal infidelity and unnatural crimes added to that mass of social cancers which were eating out the very vitals of the body-politic beneath the fairest exteriors of the ancient civilizations. In the Jewish theocracy the foundations of society were shaken as in the commonwealths of Greece and Rome. With the unity and indissolubility of marriage, the dignity of woman had disappeared, and one

half of the human race was in a state of degradation. Woman was regarded as a necessary evil, as a piece of property, or as an instrument of pleasure. She was the toy or the slave of man her master. The rottenness of society was the result of her dishonour; the restoration of its soundness rendered necessary the recognition of her human and personal rights.

To restore woman to her rightful place in the economy of the human race, to make man recognize her, acknowledge her, and treat her as his equal—with a personal dignity as perfect as his own—was part of the mission of the Redeemer of mankind. To this end He restored matrimony to its primeval type—as it was “in the beginning of the creation.” He resealed it with its two essential characteristics of unity and indissolubility; and prohibited, as subversive of it, polygamy and divorce. He did more. He sanctified it by a sacrament.

Sanctifying matrimony, He sanctified the family ; and, sanctifying the family, He sanctified society. Society rested on the family, the family rested on matrimony ; and, when the matrimonial contract was elevated to the dignity of a sacrament, society was sanctified in its foundations and at its centre.

The result was Christendom ; and, in Christendom, the dignity of woman.

20.

This majestic work of reformation—nay ! of almost recreation—was worthy of the divine wisdom and omnipotence. The Catholic Church effected what no civilization and no philosophy had been able to accomplish ; and what she did, she alone has retained the power of doing. Human societies for religious purposes outside her pale, are powerless to restrain the violence

of human passions backed by the pressure of human power. The Roman Pontiffs have throughout the ages asserted and maintained the rights of woman. In defence of the rights of woman England was lost to the Holy See. Had the Vicar of Him who restored matrimony and invested it with a sacramental dignity sacrificed the rights of one woman to satisfy the lawless desires of her royal husband, he would have sacrificed her sex; and, sacrificing her sex, he would have sacrificed society. Had it been but the sacrifice of a woman, it might have been for the common good; but it was the sacrifice of woman. The Roman Pontiffs speak, not to one age or nation, but to the world and for all time; and never has their divine wisdom and their divine fortitude shone forth more resplendently than when concerning Christian marriage their voice has given no uncertain sound. The Catholic and Roman Church which restored the position of woman,

clearly asserts and unflinchingly maintains her rights ; and with the Catholic religion her position and her rights are bound up. Within the Catholic Church her dignity is assured ; outside that Church she is at the mercy of her master.

The religion which took the place of Catholic Christianity in England has produced its natural and necessary fruit in the legalizing of divorce. A human institution cannot stem the torrent of human passions. A human institution cannot brook superior human force. The laws of England lend their sanction to what the Church of God stigmatizes as adultery ; and the idea of Christian marriage is fading from the English mind. They who sow the wind must reap the whirlwind.

There is no mistake as to the issue between the Church and the world. The world in our day is fighting to the death for two things—for secular education and for civil marriage. The

Church claims for herself the decision of all matrimonial causes, and the control of her children in their mental and their moral training. The efforts of the world are hopeless, for the Church of the living God cannot change. Wives and husbands may separate and enter with other men and women into unhallowed unions ; but such unions can never be Christian marriages. Legalized adulteries is the mildest term by which Christian men can with truth describe them. Marriage on such terms—and marriage made in contemplation of possible divorce—becomes at best a licensed concubinage.

Well may Christian women love the Roman Pontiffs ; they are the sole champions of their Christian dignity, and they have never failed. Well may they mistrust a religion which has been to them but a broken reed—founded in the dishonour of their sex, and established on what its founders sought to make the ruins of Christian matrimony.

PART II.

IN order to complete the true idea in our minds of Christian marriage we must give further consideration to three points :—

1. That Christian matrimony is a true and proper sacrament of the New Law.

2. That there is no real distinction, or possibility of separation between the *contract* of Christian matrimony and the *sacrament* of matrimony : and that consequently, in the case of baptized persons, there is no true matrimony which is not at the same time a sacrament.

3. That the Catholic and Roman Church has power and the right to constitute impediments which shall be antecedently subversive of the

matrimonial contract ; and that to her tribunal all causes which concern the bond of matrimony belong—and this not by the concession, either express or tacit, of the civil ruler : but in virtue of her own proper, original and divine right, a right which belongs to her in property in the extreme and exclusive sense that it belongs and can belong to her alone, and that it is inalienable.

I.

That matrimony is truly and properly one of the seven sacraments of the Gospel or New Law—that as such it was instituted by Jesus Christ Himself—and that it confers grace—is a revealed truth of the Catholic faith. This truth was defined by the Catholic Church in the Council of Trent, and its definition was rendered necessary by the heresies which came to a head in the sixteenth century.

Christian matrimony pre-supposes Christian baptism. Baptism is "the gate of the sacraments," and it is the baptized only who are capable of the reception of other sacraments. The matrimony of the unbaptized is therefore not a sacrament. The unbaptized are subjects of the natural law only, and their contracts cannot have any higher sanctions than those which that law affords. The matrimony of the unbaptized is a lawful contract, and a sacred bond, but it does not confer grace, and it is not a sacrament.

It follows that before the Incarnation of the Son of God, and the institution by Him of sacraments as channels of His grace, and among them of the sacrament of baptism, matrimony, however lawful and holy it may have been in itself, and as a *contract*, was not sacramental. As a lawful contract, and in itself, it was sanctified from the beginning by God in Paradise, but it was not a centre and source of

sanctification, as is a sacrament, until it was raised to the level and dignity of a sacrament by Jesus Christ.

Like every other sacrament, matrimony confers sanctifying grace. This grace is that the possession of which makes its possessor holy. Hence its name of sanctifying grace. It is also called habitual grace, as distinguished from actual grace. Actual grace is bestowed in order to an act. It is transient as is that act. It passes away. Habitual grace abides. Habitual sanctifying grace once bestowed remains in the soul of its receiver so long as it is not expelled by the commission of mortal sin, the state of which is incompatible in the same soul at the same time with the state of sanctity or holiness. Of this grace baptism bestows the first installment, and an increase to the amount of it which is already possessed is added by every other sacrament, and consequently by the sacrament of matrimony.

Along with this sanctifying grace, which is habitual and abiding, matrimony confers also a right to actual graces to be bestowed by God in time of need, and in aid of those special needs which matrimonial life entails. This life has of necessity its own sorrows as well as its own joys—its own sufferings as well as its own pleasures—and its own burdens as well as its own solace. The state of matrimony has its duties as well as its rights, and in order to their due fulfilment, the strength of the noblest nature must be supplemented by the strength of divine grace. Apart from all other difficulties, the *unity* of matrimony—or its absolute restriction of a man to one consort—along with its *indissolubility*—or the essentially life-long nature of the bond which nought but death can sunder—would be for the frailty of fallen nature a burden greater than it could bear, were it not for the succours of the grace of God. If human nature, since its fall, were left to itself and to its own resources,

novelty of pleasure would by-and-by be swallowed up in satiety, and the love of the senses which seek variety would ere long crave for satisfaction in other objects. The love that is fed by bodily beauty must wither with old age. It is of its own nature as corruptible and as evanescent as is that from which it springs. It is mortal, and is bound to die, unless grace lends to it a life which is not its own. The love of the senses is blind to its own briefness, and when its eyes are opened its days are ended. It is written in the gospel of the flesh, by one of its apostles, that marriage bonds are needless while love lasts, and that when love has vanished they are intolerable fetters. Amid the mire of this maxim lies sunk a truth which cries for a sacrament from Heaven in aid of man's weakness here on earth. If there is a state of mortal life which requires, nay, demands a sacrament, that state is matrimony. Were we left to the conjecture of our reason, we should expect a

sacrament for the benefit of those who bear Christ's yoke as married persons. Taught by God, we know that such a sacrament exists—that it was instituted by the Incarnate Son of God—and that it conveys grace which He merited on that Cross which He reddened with His Precious Blood. This sacramental grace was purchased and is bestowed for the strengthening of the married in their mutual love, in their fidelity to each other, and in their observance of each other's rights—for the well-ordering of their intercourse in accordance not merely with the promptings of sensual love and animal desire, but with the dictates of human reason, and of that reason as enlightened by divine religion—and for the education and government of their children as Christian subjects in a Christian home.

Further, along with this sacramental grace there is bestowed by means of the sacrament of matrimony an increase of theological and of

moral virtues, and among these the foremost place is held by the four which claim it—by charity and piety, by fidelity and patience. A married life which is adorned with these jewels is a life which is after the pattern of married life as it exists in the mind of Christ. It is the fruit and flower of a sacrament. It meets the eye as the visible expression of Christian matrimony.

2.

That there is no real distinction or possibility of separation between the *contract* of Christian matrimony and the *sacrament* of matrimony is a Catholic doctrine which is so certain that its contradiction would savour of more than rashness. The sacrament of matrimony is not a rite which supervenes to a contract which is already perfected in itself and apart from that sacrament. It is not a spiritual adornment, or an

extrinsic property, or an accidental quality which is superadded to the contract. It is the contract itself, which, remaining physically the same, is by a moral transformation assumed and raised to the nature and dignity, to the level and efficacy of a sacrament. Hence there is not, and there cannot be, any true matrimonial contract between baptized persons which is not of necessity at the same time a sacrament. Whenever in any union of baptized persons there is no sacrament, it is simply and solely because the contract between such persons was invalid, and was therefore not a true matrimonial contract. In every case in which the contract between Christians is matrimonially valid, it is also sacramental. The sacramental nature of the contract does not depend on the faith of the contracting parties—on their belief in sacraments—or on their being aware that matrimony is a sacrament, or that their matrimonial contract is sacramental. The sacramentality of the con-

tract depends solely on two facts—the fact of the validity of the contract—and the fact that it is entered into by persons who had previously been baptized. The sacramentality is entirely independent of their intention, and the only intention which is necessary on their part is that of entering into a valid matrimonial contract.

It follows that the marriages of Protestants—supposing them to have been validly baptized—are as sacramental as are the marriages of Catholics. Their matrimony is as much sacramental as is their baptism. It is as independent of their belief or unbelief, of their knowledge or ignorance of its sacramental nature.

As baptism does not require the ministry of a priest in order to its validity, so neither does matrimony. In matrimony the contracting parties are themselves the ministers of the sacrament, as they are themselves the creators of the contract. It is their matrimonial and mutual consent which effects the matrimonial

contract, and it effects through that contract the sacrament which is identified with it. The nuptial benediction of priest or pontiff has no more share in effecting the sacrament than it has in effecting the contract.

Even in those countries in which the disciplinary decree of the Council of Trent against clandestine marriages has been canonically promulgated, and where all marriages are consequently invalid and absolutely null and void, and mere concubinages, which have not been celebrated by the parties in presence of the parish priest or of his duly authorized deputy—the invalidity attaches not merely to the sacrament, but to the contract—and it attaches to the sacrament only through the contract. The sacrament is invalid because the contract is invalid. If the contract were valid, the sacrament would be equally valid. It is not, in the case of those countries, the benediction of the priest which is necessary in order to the validity

of the sacrament, but it is the *presence* of the parish priest, which is a necessary condition *sine quâ non* in order to the validity of the contract. He is present not as minister of the sacrament, but as *witness* to the contract—as the *testis approbatus* or approved witness required by the Church in order to the validity of the contract as a matrimonial contract. His benediction is as extrinsic to this contract as it would be to any other contract. His presence as an indispensable witness is as essential to the validity of the matrimonial contract in the cases supposed as the presence of a particular witness would be essential to the validity of any legal contract, for the validity of which the presence of such witness, in addition to the mutual consent of the contracting parties, was required by the law of the land. The benediction of the parish priest does not enter into and it forms no part of the sacrament, and its value is at the most that of a sacramental. The matrimonial

contract, and consequently the sacrament of matrimony, if it is celebrated in his presence and in any manner, so as that he is rendered capable of bearing witness to the fact, and however unwilling he might be to witness it or bear testimony to it, is valid. It would be equally valid if he were to withhold his benediction, nay, if he were to lay the contract and all concerned under his curse.

Hence in countries such as England, where the disciplinary decree of Trent has not been promulgated, clandestine marriages of Catholics—or marriages contracted by them without the presence of the priest as witness—are, as well as the marriages of baptized Protestants, valid both sacramentally and as matrimonial contracts; and this whatever may be the nature and measure of the guilt which in the case of recalcitrant Catholics attaches to the contracting parties by reason of their irregular and unlawful action.

It is unlikely that here in England, or in countries where Protestants are in an immense majority, the Trent decree will ever be canonically promulgated, since the effect of requiring the presence of the Catholic parish priest by way of witness, as a condition *sine quâ non* to the validity of all matrimonial contracts within the realm, would be to invalidate the subsequent marriages not only of Catholics who should fail in observance of this condition—a consequence which would not be of such practical inconvenience as to bar legislation, or rather promulgation of existing law—but of all baptized Protestants, and so to deprive their unions of their sacramental dignity and value, and reduce them to the level of civilly legalized concubinages. Such, in the case of baptized persons, non-sacramental unions would undoubtedly be, however little the persons contracting them should, by reason of their ignorance, be morally responsible, or in the absence of all moral guilt.

In this difference of practice or discipline in different countries there is not involved any divergence of doctrine. In every country under heaven the sacrament of matrimony consists in a valid matrimonial contract between baptized persons, but in some countries a condition *sine quâ non* is required in order to the validity of a matrimonial contract, which is not yet required, and which may never, and probably will never be required in other countries. This wise diversity of discipline in accordance with the circumstances of countries, and determined by considerations of the highest charity towards those who, although baptized, have been born into darkness, and live blinded by unbelief, is no more inconsistent with the unity of the Catholic Church than is the diversity of the laws which regulate contracts and determine their validity in England and Scotland and other countries under British rule subversive of the unity of the empire.

As in the case of every other sacrament, the sacrament of matrimony has, besides its ministers, its matter and its form. Since this sacrament consists in the contract, its matter and its form are those of the contract. The remote matter in either case, or rather, under either aspect—since the contract and the sacrament are identified—is the same, namely, the bodies of the contracting parties, or their mutual dominion over each other's bodies for the purposes of married life, which is the object of the contract. The proximate matter and the form are contained in the words or equivalent signs which express the consent which effects the contract. These words are, under different aspects, at once the proximate matter and the form. They are the proximate matter as they express delivery of dominion by one contracting party; they are the form as they signify acceptance by him of the delivery of dominion made in like manner by the other contracting party. There

is not merely a mutual delivery of dominion, but there is also a mutual acceptance of such delivery. The delivery on the one part is at the same time the acceptance of the corresponding delivery on the other part. Acceptance following on delivery is the form which completes every contract.

Further, in this, as in every other sacrament, we find a *sign*—a thing signified, and effected as well as signified—and a grace sacramentally conferred. The sign is found in the words which signify the contract. These words effect that which they signify. They effect an indissoluble union, which is henceforth no longer subject to the will and power of the contracting parties. They are powerless to rescind the contract, to dissolve the bond which it has established, or to alienate in favour of others the mutual rights of dominion over each other which it has transferred by way of property. This

indissoluble union is a sacramental shadow of the indissoluble union between Christ as Bridegroom and the Church which is His Bride ; and that again is a union formed on the pattern of the indissoluble wedding of the two natures—the divine and the human—which subsist in the one Divine Person of the Son of God. In virtue of the words, expressive of matrimonial consent, which complete the matrimonial contract, there is conferred the grace which sanctifies the matrimonial union.

It is clear therefore that nothing is lacking to this matrimonial contract between baptized persons which is required to satisfy the demands of the idea and nature of a Christian sacrament.

3.

That the Catholic and Roman Church has power—and that of inherent and inalienable divine right of which she cannot be deprived,

and which she cannot resign—to constitute impediments which shall be antecedently subversive of the matrimonial contract, is of faith and was defined by the Council of Trent.

Her possession of this power follows also from the fact that the matrimonial contract is itself the sacrament of matrimony. It is admitted on all hands as manifest that whatever concerns the sacraments, their administration, and the determination of their validity and lawfulness, belongs to the Church of God and not to the civil ruler. It is equally clear that when a sacrament consists in a contract, with which it is identified and from which it is consequently inseparable, it belongs, and that of necessity and of the nature of the case, to the same church to determine the necessary conditions to the validity as well as to the lawfulness of that contract, and so to determine who are capable, and who are not capable, of contracting. This is, in other words, to determine what are and

what are not impediments to the contract ; and whether these impediments are merely hindrances to its lawfulness, or are also antecedently subversive of its validity.

Included in this power, which belongs to the Church and to her alone—and which belongs to her of inherent and inalienable because of divine right, and not in virtue of any right bestowed from without, or derived from any civil ruler or earthly power, or of any right which she is free to resign—is the power to abrogate such impediments, or to dispense so that in particular cases they should no longer be impediments. Such dispensations require a cause, but of the adequateness of the cause, or of the lawfulness and advantage of the dispensations, she herself must necessarily be sole judge.

Finally, it also follows that to the tribunal of the Catholic and Roman Church all matrimonial causes belong, and no other tribunal upon the earth has power from God for their decision.

By such matrimonial causes we mean all causes which concern the bond of matrimony, and its validity—all causes of contracts which are antecedent to a matrimonial contract, and which are of themselves and immediately connected with that contract, as are contracts of espousal—all causes which concern consequences of the bond of matrimony, such as the legitimacy of children—and all causes which relate to separation, either temporary or perpetual; of the married persons *a mensâ et thoro*, or either, although without dissolution of the *vinculum*, or bond of matrimony. We do not include among the causes which necessarily belong to the tribunal of the Catholic Church such causes as merely concern money contracts, or civil effects which have been introduced by and depend on civil law, and to which the marriage only gives occasion. These are separable and distinct from the matrimonial contract, and consequently from the sacrament of matrimony. They are

therefore, and equally with all purely civil causes, subject to the jurisdiction of the civil ruler.

There are few subjects which more demand attention and the most careful consideration than does that of Christian marriage. In it all men and women have a vested interest, for in one way or in another it concerns every human being. In a special manner does it concern Christians, and all who claim the name of Christian. Men are uneducated as Christians in the Christian religion, if their ideas are vague with regard to a sacrament which is an essential constituent of Christianity. It concerns statesmen also, since the matrimonial contract lies at the foundation of all civil society, and through the sacrament of matrimony all civil society is sanctified. The enemies of the Catholic Church and the enemies of civil society are at one on this matter. The former would wrest the sacra-

ment from the Church's jurisdiction ; the latter would rend the contract by robbing it of the indissoluble character which makes it matrimonial. Deprived of its sacramental sanction the contract falls to the level, and will share the fate of other contracts which have become burdensome to those whom they bind. Governments which are merely human, and laws which aim at expressing not the divine law but the will of the masses who create their lawgivers, will be powerless to stay the torrent of human passion, and to set bounds to the licence of human will. Power to do this belongs to one Government alone, and belongs to it because it is, while human in its embodiment, divine in the principle of its life and action, of its thought and will, of its authority and power. The Kingdom of Jesus Christ upon the earth, in which He reigns, and through which He rules—the Catholic and Roman Church—the creator of Christian society, is its one saviour and pre-

server. By means of the sacrament of matrimony, "Jesus is called to the marriage" of Christian men, and by the power of His will a contract, natural in itself as are the waters which well forth from the earth, is transformed into a sacrament, symbolized by the wine into which at a wedding water was changed by its Creator. The first miracle of Jesus was wrought at a marriage, by means of it He manifested His glory, and by reason of it His disciples believed in Him. The history of Christian matrimony in its indissolubility is the history of a standing miracle—more marvellous in the moral order than was the wonder of Cana in the physical order—a manifestation of the glory of Jesus as He is Ruler of the princes and peoples of the earth throughout the centuries, and a motive of credibility, or ground of our belief in His doctrine, authority, and power.

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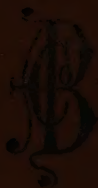
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